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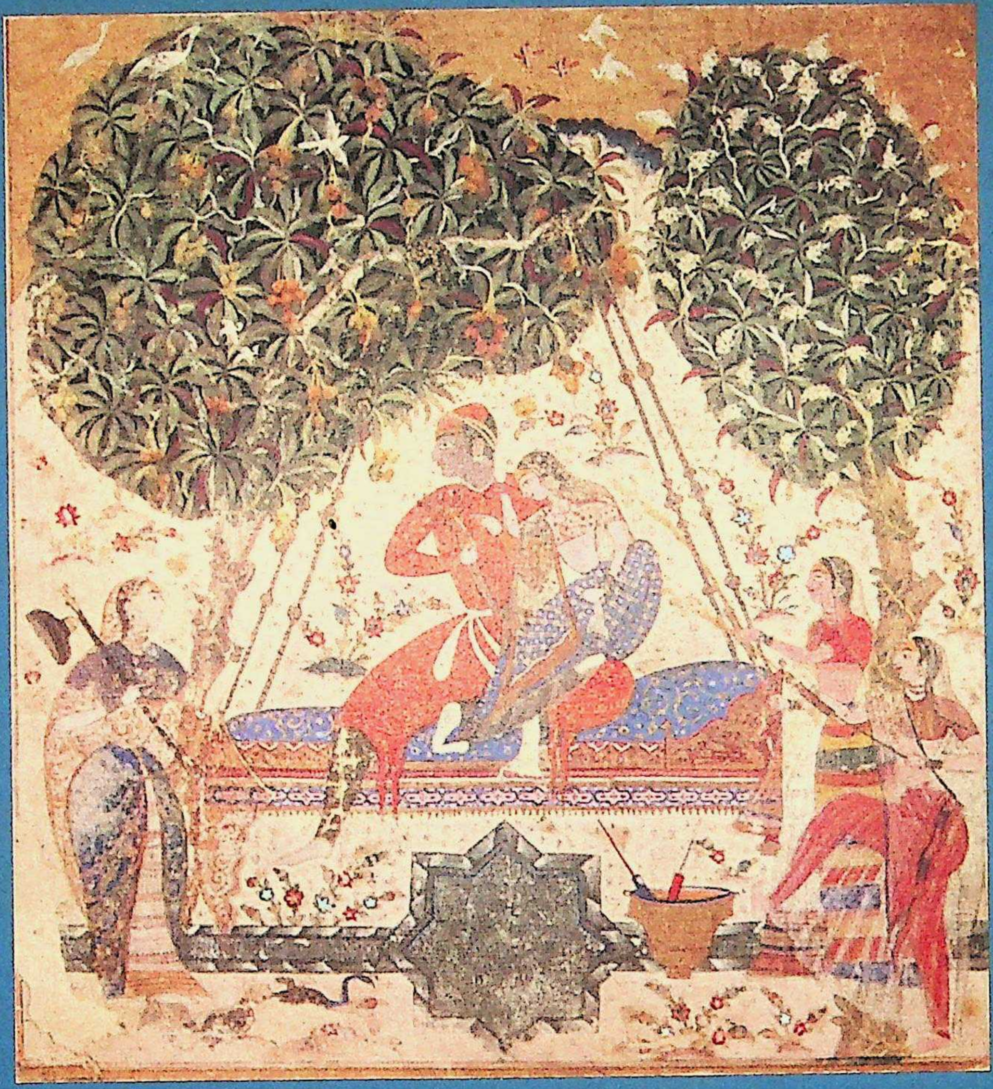

PAINTING OF THE DECCAN

XVI–XVII Century

with an introduction and notes by

DOUGLAS BARRETT

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THE FABER GALLERY
OF ORIENTAL ART

General Editor:
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Keeper of Oriental Antiquities
in the British Museum

PAINTING OF THE DECCAN
XVI–XVII Century

With an Introduction and Notes
by Douglas Barrett

Recent research has revealed that an important school of painting flourished in the Deccan quite independently of the contemporary Mughal school in Northern India. Rich in masterpieces, this school has not yet been the subject of a monograph. Mr. D. E. Barrett, well known for his studies in Indian art, fills the gap with this volume reproducing 10 subjects none of which has previously been published in colour.

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Introduction by Douglas Barrett

Until recently the finest achievement of Islamic painting in India was held to be the school which flourished from about 1560 to 1650 under the patronage of the Mughal emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The main stimulus to its growth was the personality of Akbar himself. Sympathetic to Indian manners, literature and religion, he was nevertheless proud of the house of Timur. He was also aware that it had come but recently to the throne of Delhi, and not the least duty of the artist was to reinforce the prestige of the dynasty by recording the magnificence of the court of the 'Grand Mogul' and the features and exploits of its memorable personalities. Realism, vigour and brilliant finish were the qualities demanded of the Mughal painter. He had them certainly, and was moreover a sensitive observer of the Indian landscape and, in his gentler passages, could express the pastoral mood with a quiet charm. What he lacked was an integrated style. He was an apt pupil and a clever improviser, but seemed unable to knit his many sources—Persian, Indian and European—into a personal language.

The painting of the contemporary Islamic kingdoms of the Deccan, like the atmosphere of their courts, was of a different order. The rulers of Ahmadnagar, Bijapur and Golconda were strangers to Akbar's purposeful energy. Their history reads with the inconsequence of an operatic libretto. With them the possession of a fortress or a good-looking eunuch had equal force as a casus belli, and if they were prompt to take the field, they quitted it as swiftly. Frivolous in war, they were indolent in peace, leaving the conduct of affairs to a stream of ministers and favourites chosen as much for charm as efficiency. They occupied their long leisure hours with the arts, with women and attractive cup-bearers. Akbar's paintings give the impression that these things were the official adjuncts of a great court. With the rulers of the Deccan, serious only in this, they were a passion. Unlike the Mughal with his illustrated epics and memoirs, they and their courtiers set the artist to interpret love poetry or to portray the charming companions with whose help they whiled away the time. In their own portraits they preferred to see themselves as musician, poet—many of them were poets of merit—or munificent patron. Their mature and civilized values conditioned the vision of their artists, and style, which eluded the earnest Mughal, came naturally and easily to them.

The permanent settlement of the Islamic invaders in the thirteenth century abruptly submerged the classic tradition of Indian art, which had not faltered in its development for upward of a thousand years. Painting, where a limited patronage could be found in less accessible parts of north India, survived as tiny illustrations to religious manuscripts: in these the artist was content, until well into the sixteenth century, to ring the changes on a slight, though decorative formula. The Islamic rulers might have been expected to draw some inspiration from the fourteenth-century Persian masters or the early Timurid school. If they did, the results are lost to us, and were, in any case, unable to revitalize or redirect the declining native tradition. It was not until the beginning of the sixteenth century that Persian painting seems to have elicited a response in India. There is in the India Office Library an illustrated manuscript probably painted about 1500 in the ancient province of Malwa, which lies astride the high road from Delhi to the Deccan. In the manuscript, a Nimat Namah or Cookery Book, the composition and landscape of the paintings follow closely, but ineptly, the attractive contemporary idiom of Shiraz. In his lively little figures the artist, though drawing on Persia and the native manuscript tradition, is feeling his way towards an exquisite formula, which was to feature in the loveliest sixteenth-century style of north India.[1] The style of the Nimat Namah, which may have been shared by the neighbouring Islamic kingdoms of Gujarat and Khandesh, was also to contribute a good deal to the painting of the Deccan, of which Malwa, by virtue of its position, had frequently formed a cultural province in the past.

The high plateau of the Deccan, bounded to the north and south by the Narmada and Tungabhadra rivers, had been raided since the early fourteenth century, and became in 1347 an independent kingdom under the Bahmani dynasty. Here too painting disappeared with the advent of Islam, even though their hostility towards the northern kingdom of Delhi brought the Bahmanis into close contact with the metropolitan centres of Persian art. Moreover, their kingdom was bordered on east and south by two powerful and flourishing Hindu states, Orissa and Vijayanagar, which preserved the ancient tradition in painting. But again the association seems to have proved sterile.

Such was the condition of painting in Islamic India on the eve of the sixteenth century, nor was it to change, it seems, for another fifty years. But this half-century was a momentous period in the political history of the country. In 1525 Babur, latest descendant of Timur and the first of the Great Mughals of Delhi, left the hills of Afghanistan for the hot plains of India. His son, Humayun, was driven back to Kabul, only to return a year before his death in 1556 and bequeath Delhi to the greatest of the line, his son Akbar. In the meantime the Bahmani kingdom had swiftly disintegrated. The dynasty retained for a while a

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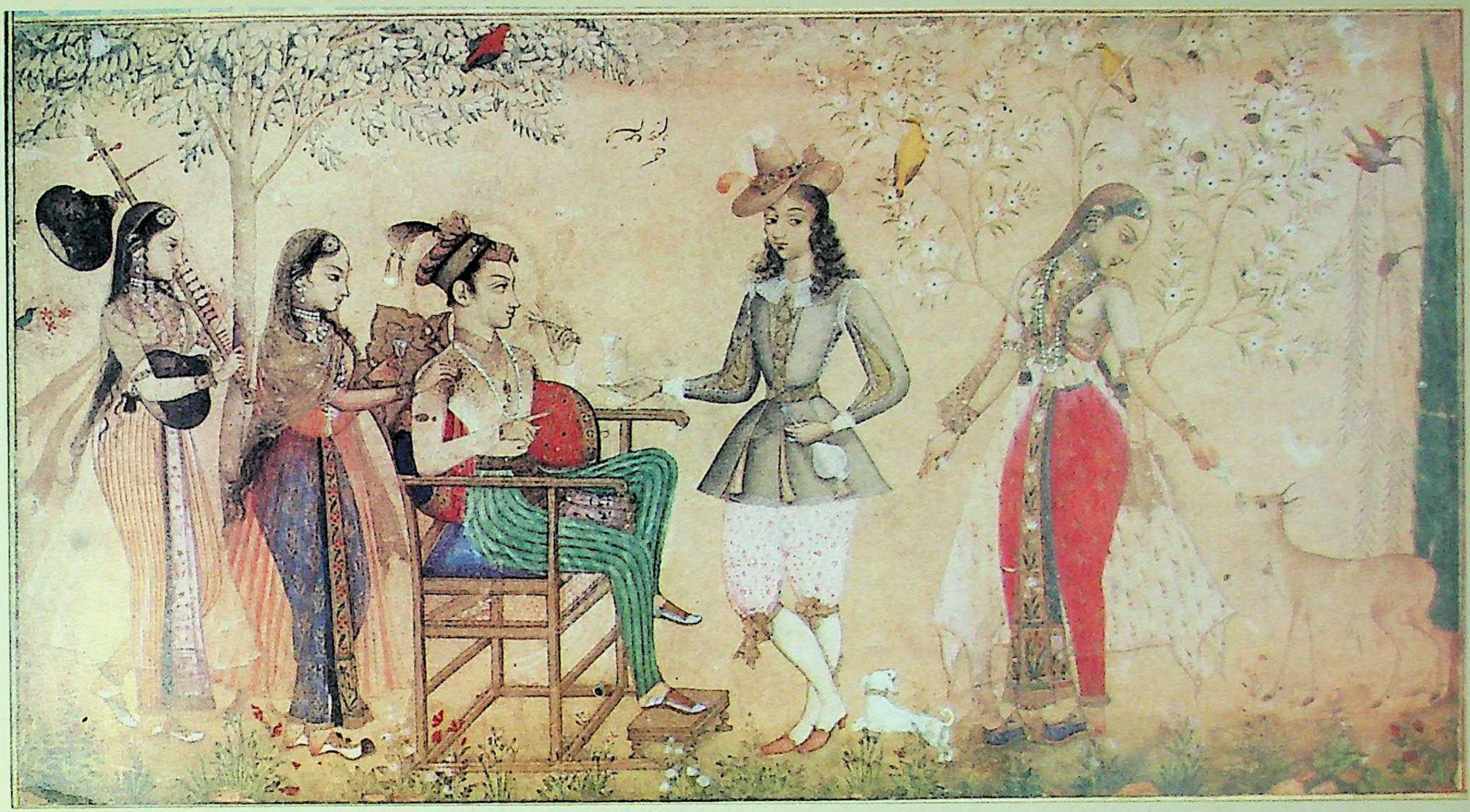

Plate 10. *A Prince in a Garden.* See page 24

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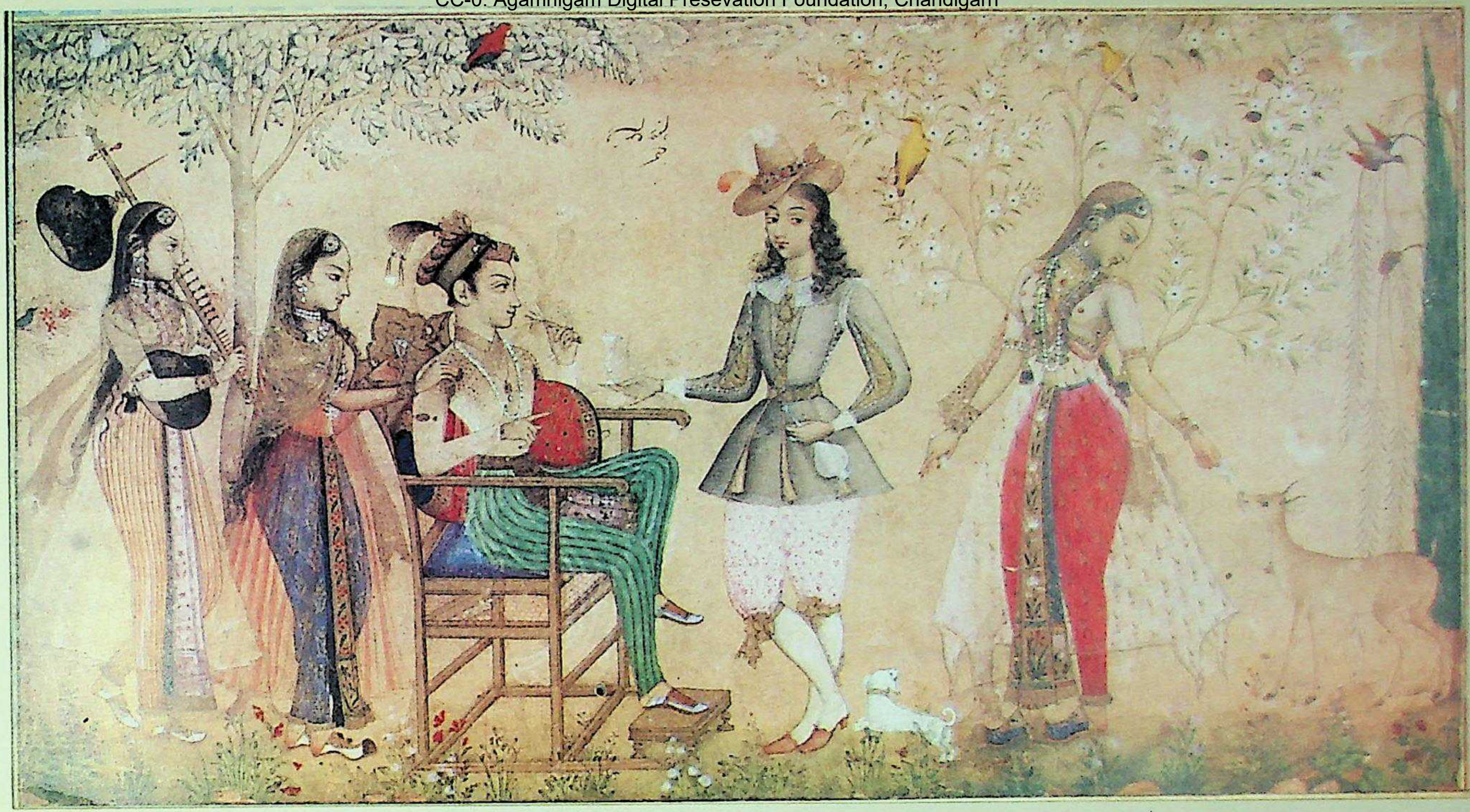

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In 1570 a second book was illustrated in the Deccan—an encyclopaedia called the Nujum al-Ulum or 'Stars of the Sciences'. Though here again much is Persian—the lavish use of gold, white and purple, and the flowered and patterned grounds—the style of Vijayanagar has left its mark on the female figures (Plate 2). These heavily bejewelled women wear their sari drawn across the bosom in southern fashion, the fall of the long, spreading end giving a lift and amplitude to the figure. The miniatures, though uneven and containing nothing comparable with the Ahmadnagar page, have a scale which suggests the fresco—rather than the book painter. The three kingdoms of the southern Deccan had all associated on terms of friendship with Vijayanagar before Talikota. Literary tradition claims there were painters at the court of Ali Adil Shah I (1558–80) of Bijapur, and it may well have been for his library that the Nujum al-Ulum was prepared.

The promise of the Ahmadnagar page was realized in a small group of paintings illustrating the modes (ragas and raginis) of Indian music (Plate 3). The composition remains a simple tableau of a few figures, framed by a pavilion beneath a cluster of domes or set against a patterned ground above formal arcading. The conventional Persian landscape continues to be used, but more ambitiously. Splendid peacocks, heraldically placed, frequently form an important element in the design. The colour range becomes more sumptuous and arresting. The figures acquire a new expressiveness, due not so much to a timid modelling of the face as to the extravagant sweep of sash and sari, which often gives the women the appearance of brilliant tropical birds. We do not know for whom this lovely series was painted. The lion's share of Deccan painting is commonly attributed to the state of Bijapur, where both Ali I and his more famous nephew Ibrahim II (1580–1627) were cultivated and generous patrons of the arts. It was Ali, who after Talikota first converted his city into a great capital. The tastes and personality of Ibrahim are more familiar. He was himself, in current eulogy, an excellent artist and calligrapher, devoted to music and a sound performer on several instruments. He was also a poet, and it is of interest that in some of his songs the musical modes are visualized as gods, lovely women or seasons of the year—an idea which was gaining popularity in Islamic India at this period. Though both the early books contribute to our series, it has more the feel of the Nujum al-Ulum, which on account of its prosaic subject, may not fairly represent the standard of accomplishment in the southern Deccan. If we see our patron in Ibrahim, the raga paintings must be placed in the last decade of the century, for in 1590 the young king was only nineteen.

About the same time two other series of ragas were painted. They are of a spectacular beauty, one of them a masterpiece (Plate 4). They share with the earlier style the well-worn Persian motifs of gold sky, high horizon and flowered ground. The women, still the stately creatures of Deccan taste, have exchanged the long sari for the skirt, bound with a sweeping, fringed sash. In place of the heavy chignon of southern fashion they affect the long single plait, as in the Ahmadnagar page. The figure is enveloped in a long veil (orhni) of embroidered gauze which projects in stiff, formal angles like wings. The men too are no longer brilliantly coloured puppets, but sleek and princely. The forms of nature begin to acquire significance for the artist: the two great mangoes which dominate the composition of our picture are true and splendid portraits of these magnificent trees. These new tendencies in Deccan painting suggest that the artist had suddenly become aware of the Mughal painting of Akbar's court, whose prestige was now paramount throughout northern India. This is not to suggest that the Deccan pictures are in any sense derivative. No painting from Akbar's ateliers has their poetry or formal qualities. But obviously the fresh and attractive realism of the northern school fired the imagination of the Deccan painter. He saw that it could be converted to his more serious picture-making. If we look for a patron who might have inspired such an artist we shall find him in Burhan II of Ahmadnagar. Burhan was the youngest son of that Husain celebrated in the early Ahmadnagar book. He rebelled several times against his elder brother Murtaza I (1565–86), known as the Madman, and finally in 1583 fled to Akbar's court, where for political reasons he was welcomed and honourably employed. It was not until 1591 that he returned, with Mughal connivance, to Ahmadnagar as king. Burhan's reign (1591–5) was short and inglorious, but he kept a brilliant court. The historian Ferishta and the poet Zuhuri, later to be the two chief ornaments of the court of Ibrahim II of Bijapur, were first attracted to Ahmadnagar, and it was to Burhan that Zuhuri dedicated his most famous composition, the Saki Namah or Book of the Cupbearer. That the Mughal elements in the raga paintings are due to Burhan's exile at Akbar's court is supported by a picture of which Burhan is the main subject (Plate 5). This is the first and perhaps the most distinguished of Deccan portraits. Although Mughal painting alone could have supplied the incentive and the formal conception of the portrait-group, the quality of the Deccan version utterly transcends its models. The cool and subtle refinement which it communicates is unique in Indian painting. Colour, as always in the Deccan, plays the major role. The bland and luminous clarity of the tones, wonderfully lit by the gold ground, will be familiar to cultivators of the gallica rose.

In 1591 Akbar had despatched missions to the Deccan courts. Khandesh acknowledged Mughal suzerainty, and Bijapur and Golconda wisely sent a form of tribute. Burhan's paltry gift was interpreted as an insult, and Akbar decided on war. By 1601 Ahmadnagar, the capital, had fallen, and the northern territory together with Berar and Khandesh was formed into three additional provinces of the Mughal Empire. The kingdom however was to survive until 1633. This was due not merely to the indecision of Akbar's successor Jahangir, but to the energy and statesmanship of the famous Abyssinian Peshwa, Malik Ambar, who established a new capital at Khirki, near the impregnable fort of Daulatabad. With the help of his Maratha auxiliaries he maintained his territory intact until his death in 1626 at the age of eighty. In 1633 however Daulatabad was finally taken by Shah Jahan. This was the end of the Nizam Shah dynasty, and the Mughal Empire now extended to the northern frontiers of Bijapur and Golconda. During this period the new style, as represented by the portrait of Burhan II, continued to develop in Ahmadnagar. No doubt Murtaza II (1602–30) in his capital Khirki or the mountain fortress of Daulatabad pursued the careless activities of his line, unmoved by the bustle of his protector and minister Malik Ambar. The languor of the still summer afternoons spent in his garden on the high Deccan is beautifully conveyed by the well-known 'Siesta' in Berlin (Plate 6). Here the clear and brilliant palette of the Burhan portrait is set against a sombre green, relieved by little touches of white and yellow. The great curve of the composition from the kneeling attendant through the sleeping prince and plane tree to the embowered castle is controlled by the strong diagonals of the red sword-case and the white scarf held by the standing figure. Unfortunately, but two pictures[1] remain which can be attributed to Ahmadnagar—distinguished portraits of Abyssinian dignitaries, one of whom is the great Peshwa himself leaning on his long Deccan sword.

In the struggle with the Mughal Empire the two southern kingdoms had taken little part. They supported Malik Ambar with cash subsidies, while hastening to make their peace with the Empire when it seemed politic. Of the Deccan kingdoms, Golconda had probably gained the most from the defeat of Vijayanagar. Ibrahim Qutb Shah (1550–80) had extended his territory to the south and east, regaining the sea-coast and the lucrative textile trade with Persia and Indonesia. In 1580 he was succeeded by his son Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. During his long reign, which lasted until 1611, Golconda was at the height of its prosperity. Muhammad Quli occupied his time with art and poetry and the embellishment of his capital. He also founded Hyderabad, and gave it its best known monument, the Char Minar. It was now, in 1605, that the Dutch arrived off Masulipatam, the chief port, soon to be followed by the first English venture. To the reign of Muhammad Quli may perhaps be attributed a miniature in the Chester Beatty Library (Plate 7). Its close similarity to the 'Siesta' is immediately apparent. Both share the background of romantic crag and castle drawn from late Akbar painting, though ultimately of European origin. The palette is also similar, though in the Chester Beatty picture unusually sumptuous. Obviously intermarriage of the royal families and exchange of artists had made the Ahmadnagar style common property in the Deccan. Muhammad Quli was succeeded by his nephew Muhammad (1611–26). Here we are on surer ground since we possess an impressive portrait of the young king soon after his accession (Plate 8). A brilliant black replaces the gold as foil to the Deccan palette. The patterned and flowered ground is familiar from the Nujum al-Ulum and the first set of raga pictures.

The Ahmadnagar style also spread to Bijapur, which quickly evolved a lovely version of its own. It is best represented by a noble portrait in the Bikaner Collection, which may be dated about 1600. The subject is probably the young king Ibrahim II himself.[2] Though a miniature this picture achieves a grandeur by the beautiful placing of the central figure. Its rich texture is due to the alternation of passages of brilliant Flemish detail and areas sombre or unworked. An impressive study of an elephant is probably also by the hand of a Bijapur artist.[3] This splendid animal may well be his much-prized Chanchal which Ibrahim was prevailed upon to present to Akbar. Ibrahim was careful to remain on good terms with the Mughals. He sent an ambassador to Jahangir's coronation in 1605, and later, in 1612, 1614 and 1618, made his formal submission—a meaningless gesture but pleasing to the Emperor. Portraits are said to have been exchanged, and were, no doubt, assessed by the royal connoisseurs. And it may have been in emulation of the Mughal style, whose naturalistic modelling now bore the strong impress of European painting, that Ibrahim's artists produced from about 1615 to his death a small group of portraits which represent the culmination of the Bijapur style.[4] But whereas the Mughal portrait makes its impact by dazzling technique, in Bijapur naturalism remains subservient to imaginative composition and poetic content. The finest of the Bijapur group is undoubtedly the portrait of Ibrahim in the British Museum. The gold, violet and rose finery of the solitary figure, the mystery of the dark landscape with its small delicate flowers and glinting creepers, the softly-lit castle, all combine to express a quiet melancholy which is reflected in the sensitive face of the king himself. A comparison with the matutinal freshness of the famous miniature by Nicholas Hilliard of 'A Young Man leaning against a Tree', painted but a generation earlier, is inevitable. One recalls the painter James Story who left England in 1583 with the audacious Ralph Fitch on the 'Tiger' immortalised by the witch in Macbeth, and setting up shop in the town of Goa, which had been snatched from

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[1] In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

[2] Basil Gray. *Treasures of Indian Miniatures*. Oxford, 1956, pl. III.

[3] N. C. Mehta. *Studies in Indian Painting*. Bombay, 1926. pl 47.

[4] This group is unrepresented here, since the finest examples are easily accessible in the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, and the India Office Library.

[*Continued on page* 24

Plate 1

A page (folio 58) from the

TARIF-I-HUSAIN SHAHI

Ahmadnagar, 1565–9

Size: $7\frac{1}{10} \times 5\frac{1}{5}$ in.

Bharata Itihasa Samshodhaka Mandala, Poona

The Tarif-i-Husain Shahi, a Persian poem in eleven cantos, celebrates the reign of Husain Nizam Shah I (1553–65) of Ahmadnagar. The poem is unfinished, though the last three pages of the book have been marginated. Fulsome praise of Husain's chief queen, Khanzada Humayun, whose beauty and character form canto V of the poem and who features conspicuously in cantos VI to VIII, and the cutting short of the last canto—the king's death is not narrated—suggest that the book was interrupted by the downfall of the queen, who having acted as regent for her son, Murtaza I, was imprisoned by him in the fort of Shivner in 1569. It is unlikely that her two sons, Murtaza I and Burhan II, neither remarkable for filial piety or indeed any conventional virtue, would have cared to continue the work. The date of the book and its paintings may therefore be accepted as A.D. 1565–9. There were, according to a note on the first page, originally fourteen paintings. There are now twelve—battle (of Talikota) and throne scenes, and the miniature illustrated here. The book also contains some fair illumination.

The miniature illustrates the Dohada theme, in which a tree is made to blossom by a woman's embrace or touch. Only a woman at once lovely and chaste could successfully make this sensuous approach. This charming conceit is as old in Indian art as the sculptures of Bharhut and Sanchi: it is used here as a delicate compliment to the queen. The main charm of the picture lies in the palette, here introduced for the first time, the blue ground and gold sky and gold edging to the leaves contrasting vividly with the orange, yellow and mauve-pink of the figures. The whites are cleverly handled to give movement to the composition and sparkle to the women.

The striped scarf with which the attendant fans the queen—a ubiquitous feature in Deccan painting—appears in the Malwa Nimat Namah.

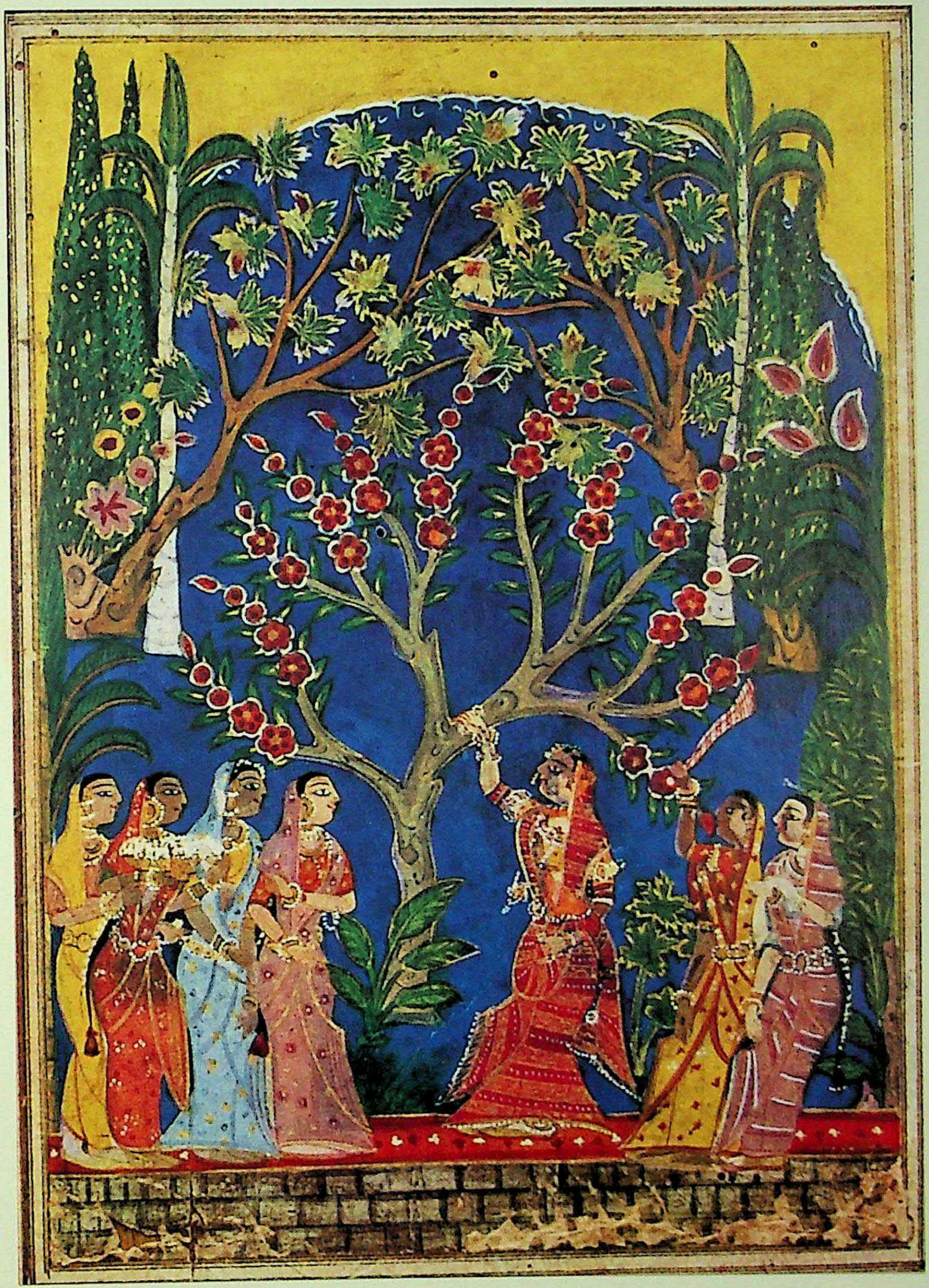

Plate 2

A page (folio 248 verso) from the

NUJUM AL-ULUM

Bijapur, 1570

Size: $8\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{20}$ in.

The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

The Nujum al-Ulum or 'Stars of the Sciences' is an encyclopaedia of subjects chosen with the catholicity of a Sir Thomas Browne. In an enumeration of the one hundred and forty aspects of the earth, the spiritual forms of the guardians of each are represented. This is one. The book is dated 1570 (A.H. 978) in three places. A note, on page one, by a former owner states that the book was once the property of Ibrahim II of Bijapur. Even if the value of this note, the date of which is uncertain, is questioned, there can be no doubt of the southern influence on the style. This is apparent not only in the female type and costume but also in much decorative detail. A frieze of lions and swans on a full-page illustration, for example, is in pure southern taste. Several miniatures represent Hindu deities. On present evidence the provenance of the Nujum al-Ulum may be accepted as the southern Deccan, probably Bijapur, though Golconda is also a fair candidate since we know there were artists at the court of Ibrahim Qutb Shah[1] (1550–80).

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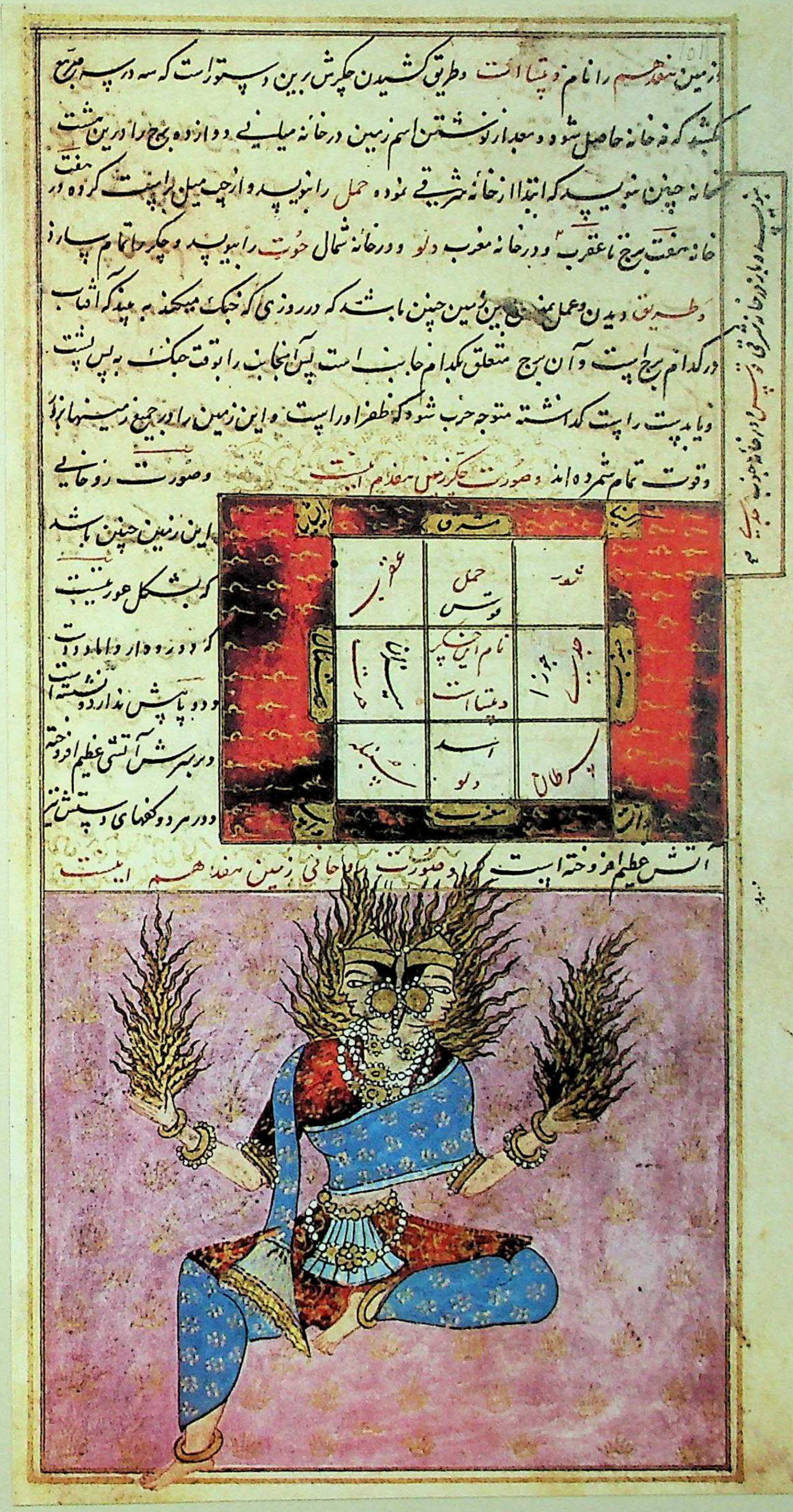
[1] One certain document (Chester Beatty MS. Mughal XXX) survives from his reign—a Medical Encyclopaedia written at the capital by Faqir Baba Mirak of Herat in 1572 (A.H. 980). It contains a fine illuminated double frontispiece, which is however in metropolitan Persian style.



زمین هفدهم را نام دهپتا است و طریق کشیدن چکرش برین دستور است که سه در سه مربع
بکشید که نه خانه حاصل شود و بعد از نوشتن اسم زمین در خانه میانی دوازده برج را درین هشت
خانه چنین بنویسید که ابتدا از خانه شرقی نموده حمل را بنویسد و از جهت میان راست کرده در هفت
خانه هفت برج تا عقرب و در خانه مغرب دلو و در خانه شمال حوت را بنویسد و چکر را تمام سازد
و طریق دیدن و عمل نمودن این زمین چنین باشد که در روزی که جنگ میکند به بیند که آفتاب
در کدام برج است و آن برج متعلق بکدام جانب است پس آن جانب را بوقت جنگ به پس پشت
و یا بدست راست گذاشته متوجه حرب شود که ظفر او راست و این زمین را در جمیع زمینها بزور
و قوت تمام شمرده اند و صورت چکر زمین هفدهم اینست

ثور	حمل و قوس	عقرب
جوزا جدی	نام این چکر دهپتا است	میزان حوت
سرطان	اسد دلو	سنبله

و صورت روحانی
این زمین چنین باشد
که بشکل عورتیست
که دو رو دارد و چهار دست
و دو پایش ندارد و نشسته است
و بر سرش آتشی عظیم افروخته
و در هر دو کفهای دستش نیز
آتش عظیم افروخته است و صورت روحانی زمین هفدهم اینست

بنویسد و باز در خانه مشرق [illegible] و در خانه جنوب جدی

Plate 3

A RAGINI

Bijapur, 1590–1600

Size: $8\frac{9}{10} \times 6\frac{9}{10}$ in.

National Museum, New Delhi

The group to which this raga illustration belongs comprises ten pictures, eight[1] of which are in the collection of H.H. the Maharaja of Bikaner and one in the State Museum, Baroda.[2] Our picture also belonged to the Bikaner collection. A further example[3] in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras, is in the same style, though not perhaps from the same set.

The two Sanskrit verses describe how a lovely woman, her body at ease after love, sings to the accompaniment of her lute, unaware that her sari has slipped from her shoulder. Her companions fan her. At the top of the page is written in Devanagari characters Patahansika 6 (presumably the number in the series) and in Arabic characters Patahansika Ragini. This is the only picture of the set in which the musical mode is not explicitly mentioned in the verses. The significance of the black elephant is obscure.

The women with their heavy chignons and long saris seem to develop from the Nujum al-Ulum rather than from the Ahmadnagar type. Our artist also shares with the Nujum al-Ulum a fondness for patterned grounds, which we shall find later at Golconda. It is however unwise to labour the point since the three main kingdoms were related by marriage—Husain I of Ahmadnagar's famous sister, Chand Bibi, was the wife of Ali I of Bijapur—and artists, like musicians, may have been interchanged.

An interesting feature of this series is the horizontal division of the composition into two or three zones, as if the artist were not happy with the upright Persian format and preferred the square or horizontal oblong of the Indian manuscript tradition. The curious 'brick' filling at the base of the Ahmadnagar page (Plate 1) is found again on the raga in Baroda. Sometimes an illuminated panel or a peacock flanked by trees or a 'cloud' motif is used. This convention is continued in so-called Malwa painting of the 17th century.

[1] Basil Gray. *Treasures of Indian Miniatures*. Oxford, 1955. pls. I and II. Unfortunately the remainder are unpublished.

[2] H. Goetz. *Bulletin of the Baroda Museum and Art Gallery*. Vol. I, Pt. I. 1943–4.

[3] Moti Chandra. *Kala Nidhi*. Vol. I, No. I. The Bharat Kala Bhavan also possesses a second raga, which is unpublished. Two other ragas, of fine quality but unpublished, are in the Jodhpur collection and in that of Sri Motichand Kharjanchi.

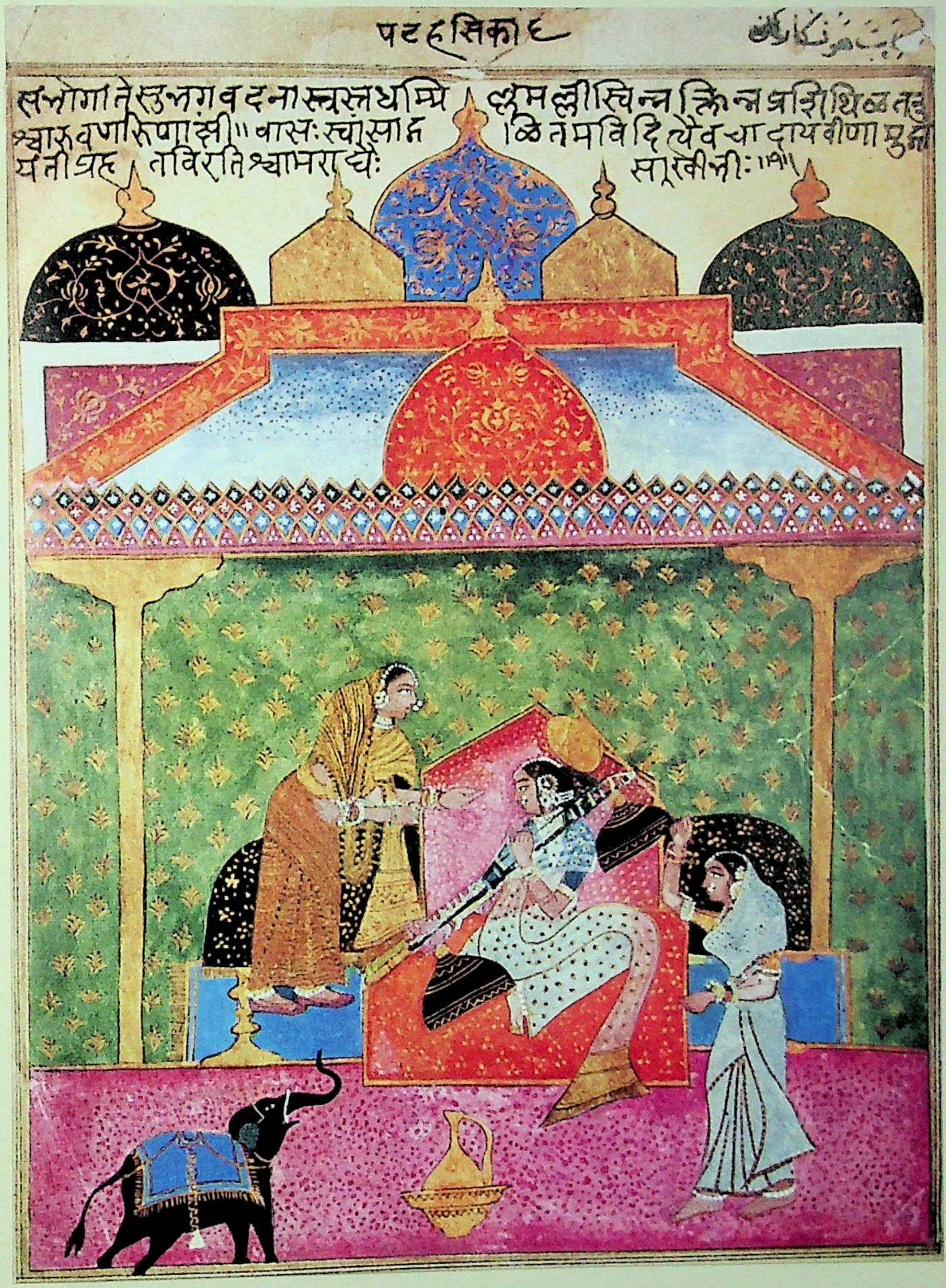

पटहसिका ६
सम्भोगान्ते स्खलगवदना स्रस्तधम्मि ल्लमल्लीस्विन्नक्लिन्नश्लथितत
श्चारुवर्णारूपाढ्यी॥ वासः स्वांसा द्व लितमविदित्येव चा दाय वीणा मुद्रा
यन्ती प्रह तविरतिश्यामराचैः सारुकीलीः॥१॥

Plate 4

VASANTA RAGA

Ahmadnagar, 1591–5

Size: 9⅖ × 7⅕ in.

National Museum, New Delhi

This picture, formerly in the Bikaner Collection, seems to be the sole survivor of the set. Two pictures of a second set closely related to the first are also in the Bikaner Collection. They are a fine Kakubha Ragini and a splendid fragment of a peacock in full flight against delicate foliage.[1] A third set in the Roerich Collection remains unpublished.

At the top of the picture is written in Devanagari characters Vas (anta) and in Arabic characters Hindola Rag and Vasant Ragini. The raga depicted is in fact the Vasanta, the introduction of the swing (hindola) leading to the confusion of titles.

The Sanskrit verses describe how Vasanta (Spring) is sprayed by young maidens in a mango grove on a Kashmiri mountain. Praised by strings of bees he disports himself on a swing. Like a blue lotus (dark complexioned) and dressed in a tawny garment, he holds in his fingers the shoots of the fresh mango.

The young swarthy Spring wears a four-pointed coat. Its origin is obscure, but it was the prevalent fashion at the court of Akbar, and may have been adopted by him from Malwa. The distinctive feature of the women's costume is the projecting transparent veil. This, which occurs first in the Malwa Nimat Namah, was elaborated in the lovely series known as the Chaurapanchasika Group, which was perhaps developed in its classical form in Malwa or south Rajasthan during the second half of the 16th century. Whether this feature in our painting was drawn from the Chaurapanchasika Group or represents a parallel development from the Nimat Namah, it is difficult to decide. This detail of costume however does underline the northern Deccan origin of the Vasanta Raga. The textile design on the skirt of the girl on the swing is also found in the Chaurapanchasika Group.[2]

The two women on the right are spraying the lovers on the swing with coloured water from bamboo syringes, as in the Holi Festival of Spring.

[1] A further fragment is in the Kanoria Collection, Calcutta.

[2] See Basil Gray. *Rajput Painting*. London, 1948. pl. 3. The date and provenance given to the Chaurapanchasika Group by Gray in its original publication, are strongly supported by the discovery of the Malwa Nimat Namah.

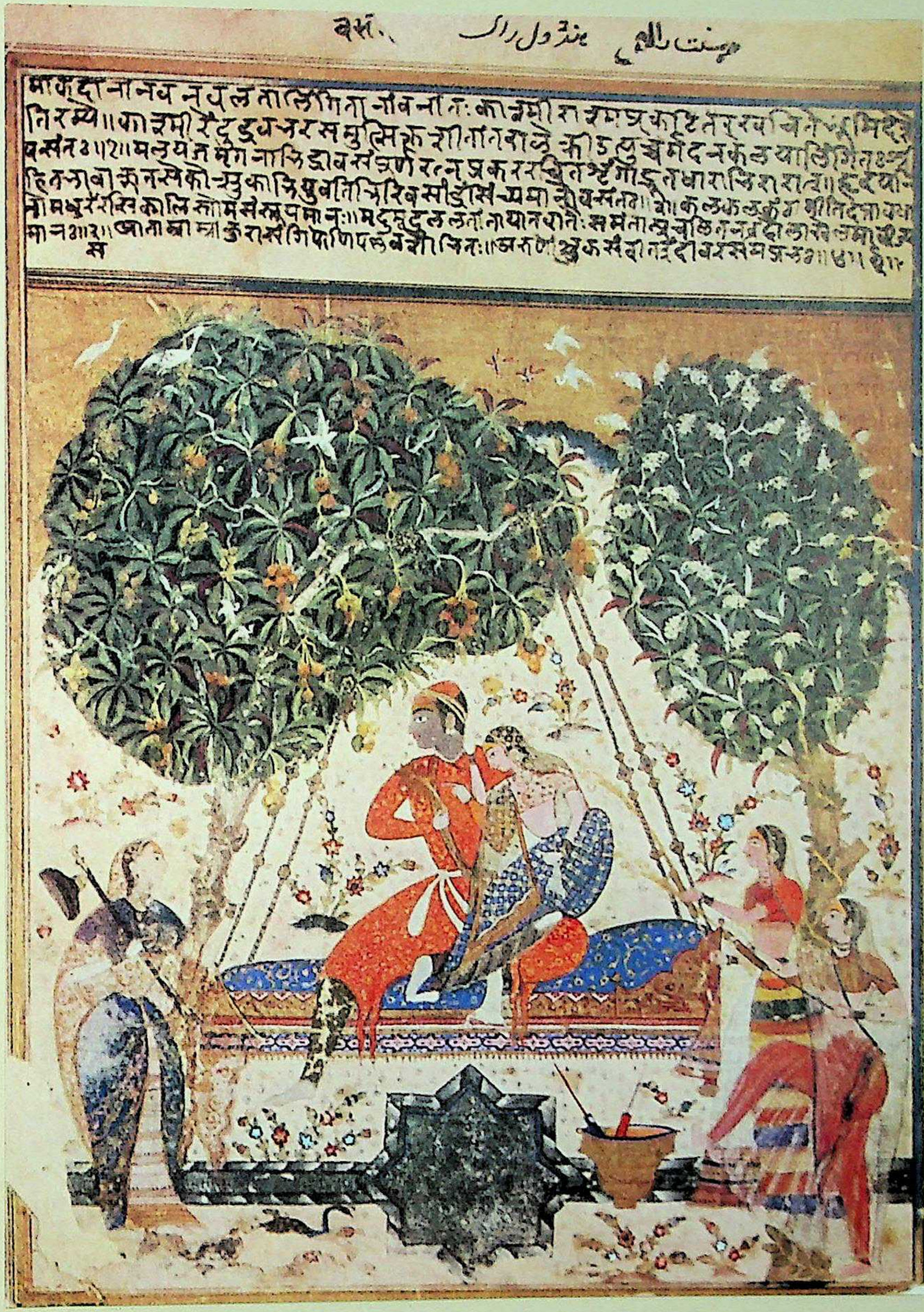


Plate 5

Portrait of

BURHAN NIZAM SHAH II

(1591–95) of Ahmadnagar.

Size: $9\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{16}$ in.

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (Supplément persan 1572, folio 26).

On the reverse of this picture are several inscriptions in Persian and three seals. An inscription in the centre reads ''Burhan Nizam al-Mulk''. This is presumably in a Mughal hand, since the Mughals never recognised the royal title of the Deccan rulers and always addressed the kings of Bijapur, Golconda and Ahmadnagar as Adil Khan, Qutb al-Mulk and Nizam al-Mulk. Below this some discerning connoisseur has written "the earliest work of the Deccan'' (Kar-i-avval-i-Dakkan). In other inscriptions recording owners the dates 1643–4 (A.H. 1053) appears twice, and 1715–6 (A.H. 1128) once. Since this picture would be dated about 1600 irrespective of its subject, we may consider it a portrait of Burhan II, and not an ideal one of his ancestor Burhan I (1509–53).

Burhan, imprisoned by his elder brother Murtaza I in Shivner in 1569, after an unsuccessful rebellion fled to Malwa and then to Akbar's court in 1583. In 1585 he joined the unsuccessful Mughal attack on Berar as an amir of Akbar. From Malwa he entered Berar again in 1589, and was again defeated. Finally, with the support of Ibrahim II of Bijapur and Raja Ali Khan of Khandesh, he regained his kingdom, defeating the puppet ruler, his own son, on 7 May, 1591. When he came to the throne Burhan was thirty-one or thirty-three, which is about the age at which he is portrayed here.

Burhan, seated on his throne, is offering gold to a courtier. A sword-bearer fans the king with a white cloth, and a young page offers him pan. Both are Abyssinians, who were much favoured by the Deccan rulers. The men wear the enchanting costume of the Deccan, the scarlet or blue-green of their pyjamas muted to apricot or milky jade by the fine cotton coats. The boy wears a six-pointed coat fashionable at Akbar's court. All three attendants affect the painted and gold embroidered court girdle (patka), for which the Deccan, especially Golconda, was famous. This is the first Deccan painting to show the face not in profile but in three-quarter view; it is curious how the further eye projects, as in the older manuscript tradition.

Burhan had a fine library which was captured by the Mughals at the fall of Ahmadnagar in 1600. This picture may well have formed part of the loot.

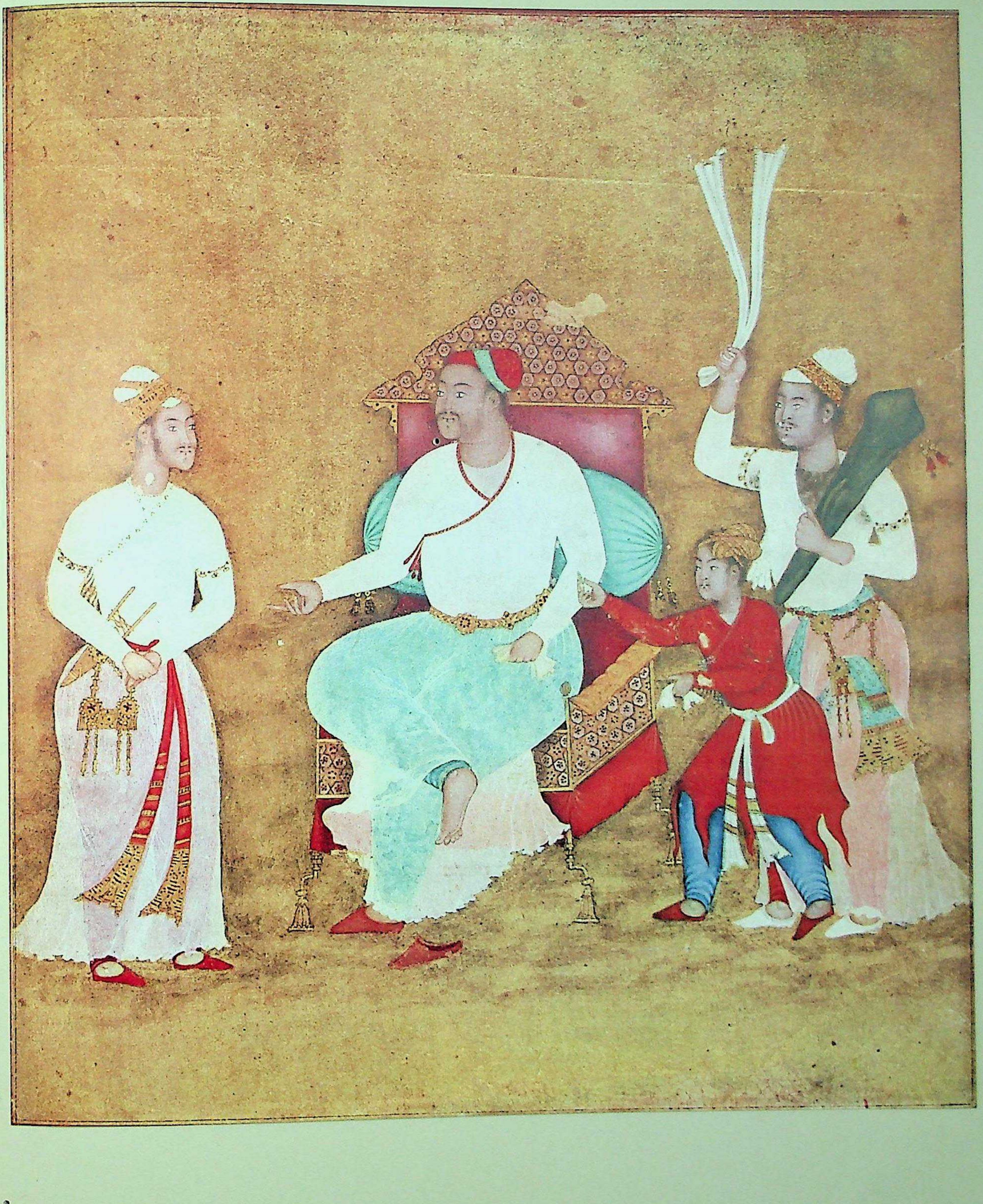


Plate 6

THE SIESTA

Ahmadnagar, about 1605

Size: $8\frac{1}{10} \times 5\frac{3}{5}$ in.

Staatliche Museen, Berlin

This miniature formed part of the collection made by Major Polier, a Swiss soldier who lived in India from 1757 to 1788. In the centre of the inner frame of the mount is inscribed in Persian ''Lord of the Deccan'' (Badshah-i-Dekhan). This inscription is not earlier than Polier. Many of Polier's pictures are 18th-century copies. Even if the 'Siesta' is claimed as such, it must be recognized that it retains the quality of the original to an extent unparalleled in other known copies.

The 'Siesta' stands very close in style to the portrait of Burhan II. It is possible that the drowsing prince is Murtaza II, who was placed on the throne by Malik Ambar in 1602[1]. At Ambar's death he was controlled by Ambar's son, Fath Khan, and put to death by him in 1630. He was, in the harsh judgment of the historian, effeminate and slothful, qualities which have often made a generous patron if not a good king.

The prince lies beneath a large plane tree. The high landscape seems also to be derived from late Akbar painting, though Ahmadnagar had contact with the original European source through the Portuguese settlement at Chaul, south of Bombay. The landscape is however treated not as a naturalistic setting to the figures but as a formal component of the design. The two kneeling pages are Abyssinians. One massages the prince's leg, the other offers wine. Both wear the elaborate gold belts and jewelled armbands of the subsidiary figures in the Burhan II portrait. The standing sword-bearer wears the four-pointed coat.

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[1] If it is a portrait. The subject is also found on Golconda painted hangings.

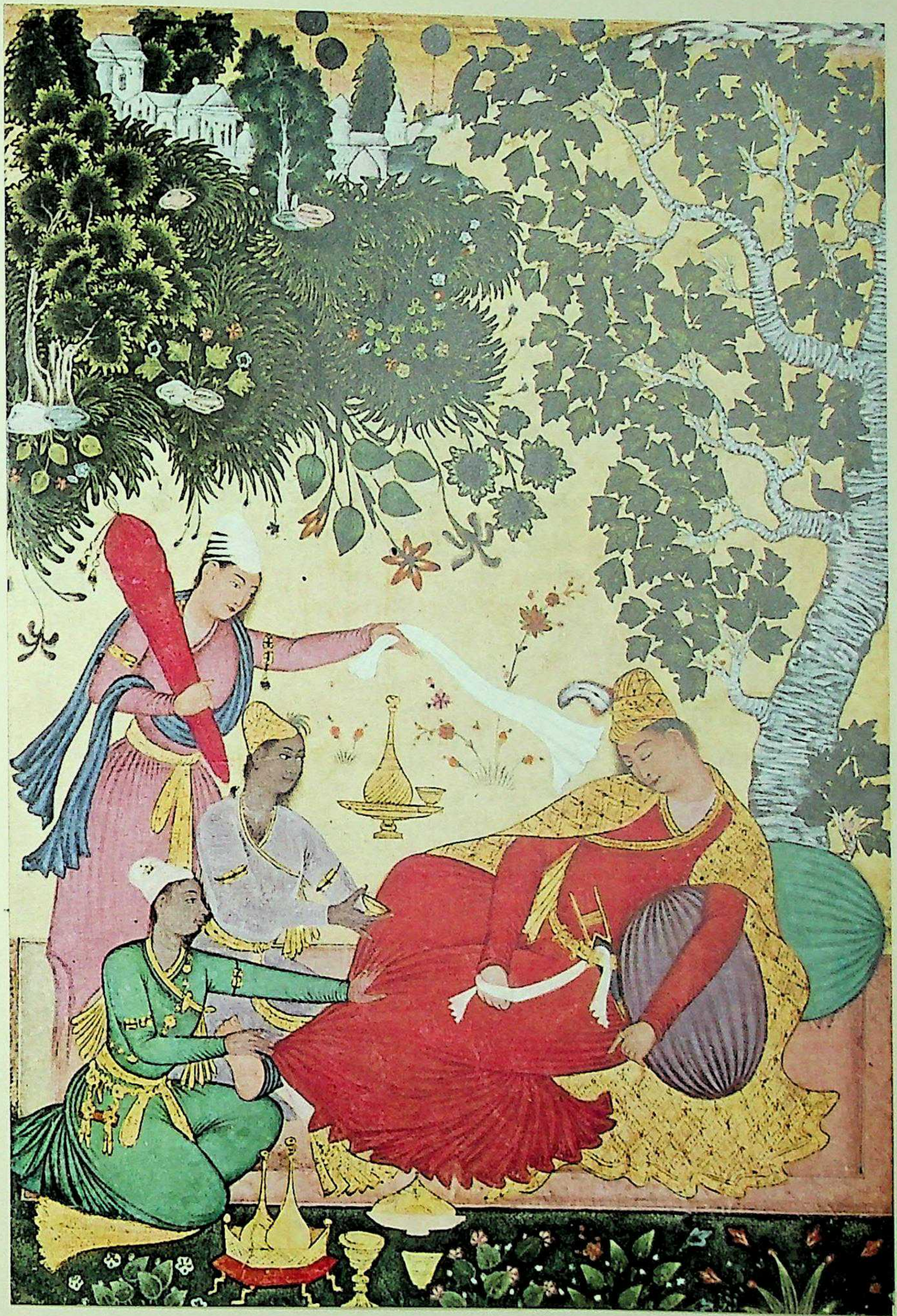

Plate 7

LADY WITH MYNA BIRD

Golconda, about 1605

Size: 7½ × 4½ in.

The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

The subject and provenance of this enchanting picture are both uncertain. It is possible that a pendant to the lady whispering to her talking bird was provided by the 'Young Man holding a Parrot' in the Cowasji Jehangir Collection, of brilliant colouring and perhaps of similar date. Both were probably favourites or types of beauty which appealed to the patron's taste. That the lady is a Yogini, as has been suggested, is unlikely. Basil Gray's suggestion that she may be Balqis, the Queen of Sheba, is more attractive. It is certainly a subject which would have taken the fancy of the Deccan rulers, and the lady is dark complexioned.

The Cowasji Jehangir miniature carries on its mount an inscription referring to the subject as a member of the Qutb Shah family. While this is late and carries little weight, both pictures are distinctive variants of the early 17th-century Deccan style. The exaggerated swirl of the girdle and stole suggests one of the southern kingdoms. In this connection we may repeat an observation of William Methwold, in charge of the English factory at the chief port Masulipatam from 1618 to 1622, who says that the talented courtesans of Golconda wore "about their neckes many chaines of small pearle and corall". The lady also wears the four-pointed coat over her pyjama. The large flowers on either side of the lady seem to be inspired by the painting on Chinese porcelain, small parcels of which fetched high prices at Golconda according to the Dutch merchants.

Another version of this picture (unpublished) is in the collection of Ramesvar Rao, Rajah of Wanapurthy.

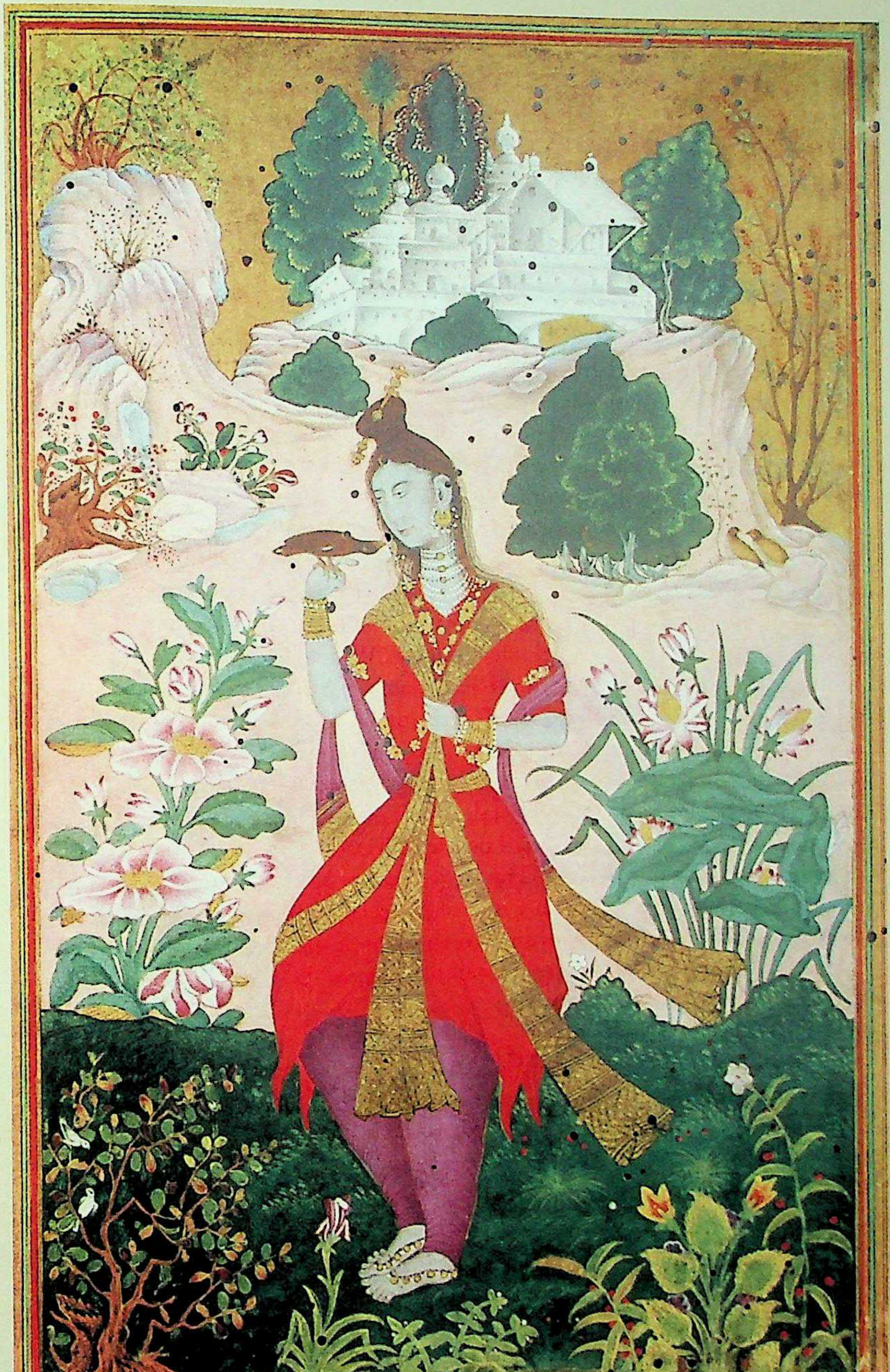

Plate 8

Portrait of

MUHAMMAD QUTB SHAH

(1611–1626) of Golconda.

Size: $9\frac{9}{10} \times 6\frac{1}{10}$ in.

British Museum (1937, 4–10, 01)

The young king has been identified as Ibrahim II Adil Shah of Bijapur. His costume however is that worn by Muhammad Qutb Shah and his predecessor Muhammad Quli in late 17th-century portraits made by Golconda artists for European visitors to the court. His angular features resemble those of Muhammad Qutb Shah as we see him about the age of thirty in a fine Mughal copy[1] of a Deccan portrait. Muhammad was eighteen when he came to the throne. Our portrait shows him soon after his accession and may be dated about 1612. He was then, in the opinion of Floris, one of the first Dutch observers, "a yongman of great hope". His reign was uneventful. He founded the Mecca Masjid in Hyderabad, and was, like all his line, something of a poet.

The king is seated on his throne in a pavilion. He wears on his shoulders, in the words of William Methwold, "a loose white callico cloth, in use like our sommer clokes". Three ambassadors present their credentials to the king. Below are four richly caparisoned Arabian horses led by pages. We have a description of such an embassy to Muhammad Quli from Shah Abbas of Persia in 1603, when valuable gifts of jewels, carpets, velvets and horses were made. These horses were especially prized in the Deccan. Methwold says: "the king (of Golconda) sendeth also an adventure (to Mocha), the proceed whereof is invested in Arabian horses, which are returned not above sixe or eight in a shippe, whereof they make great account; for in this countrey there is no race of good horses". One of the pages to the right of the king is an Abyssinian: all three wear the Golconda girdle (patka). All the figures affect long, wide straps on each side of the coat, in a contrasting colour and often gold edged. This fashion, favoured at Golconda and Bijapur, is not found at Ahmadnagar, where the straps are narrow and unobtrusive, like those of Akbar's court.

The lavish display of gold plate and the curiously looped girdles of the pages are also found in five excellent Golconda miniatures of about 1610 to 1620 inserted in a Divan of Hafiz (British Museum. Ad. 16762) dated 1643.

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[1] By Mir Hashim. (E. B. Havell. *Indian Sculpture and Painting*. London, 1928. Frontispiece).

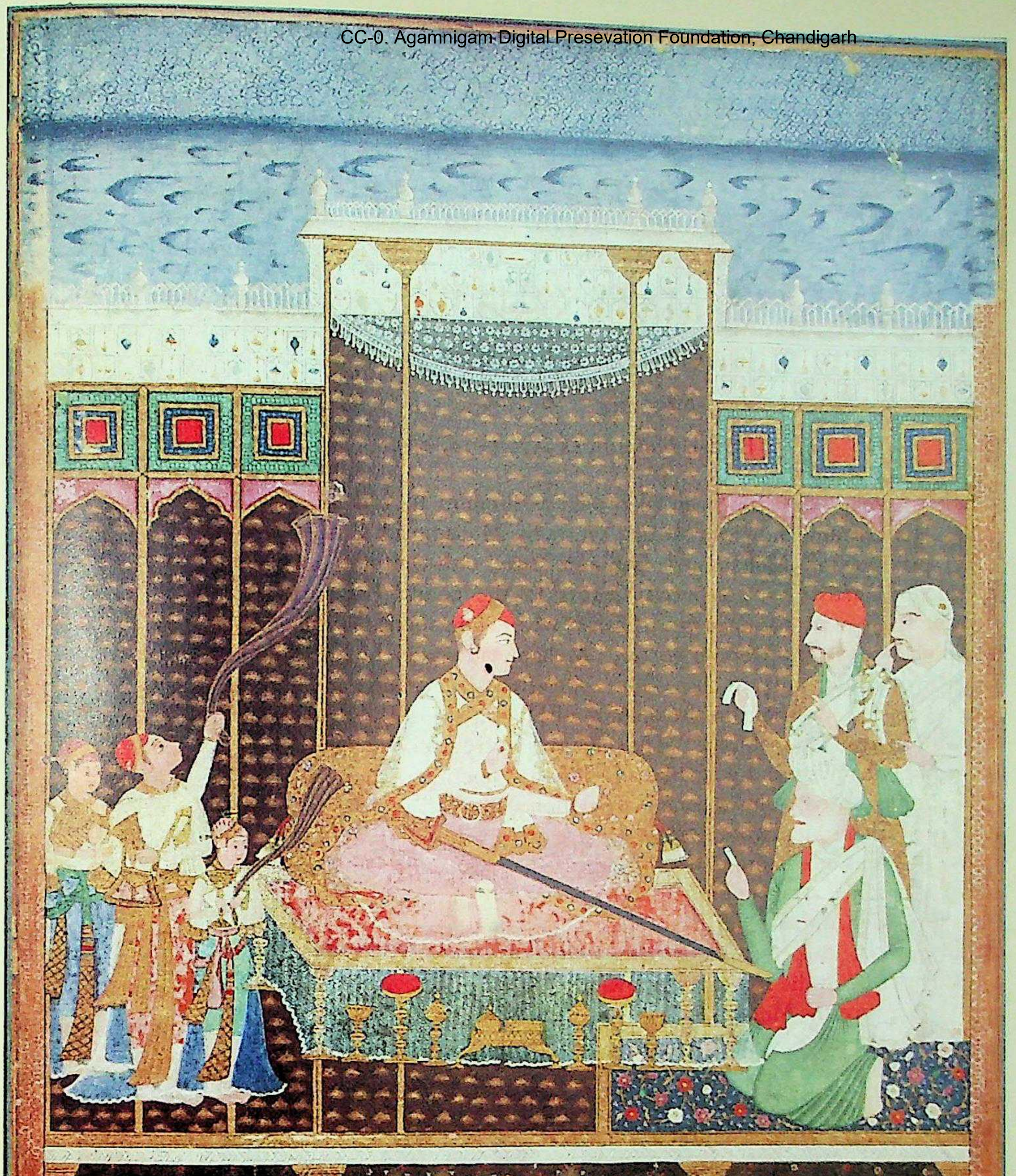

Plate 9

Portrait of

MUHAMMAD ADIL SHAH

(1627–56) of Bijapur.

Size: $6\frac{1}{8} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$ in.

British Museum (1937, 4–10, 04)

An inscription in a cartouche on the mount of this miniature describes the subject as Ali II Adil Shah* (1656–72). It is however a portrait of his predecessor Muhammad, a younger son of Ibrahim II, who came to the throne at the age of fifteen. This is confirmed by a portrait of Muhammad in a Divan of Urfi[1] written for him by Shah Muhammad Darabi at the capital in 1637 (A.H. 1046). Our picture may be dated about 1640. A third, full-length, portrait in the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India is a little later—about 1650.

The king holds a flower in his right hand, and a mango in his left. The plain green background is a common feature in Mughal portraits of the Shah Jahan period.

* A good portrait of Ali II of about 1660 is in the Cowasji Jehangir Collection. (Karl Khandalavala. "Five Miniatures," *Marg*. Vol. V, No. 2, pl. A). Considered by Khandalavala to be Ibrahim II of about 1594, it resembles closely a portrait of Ali II in the British Museum. (Or. 22,282 No. 13) and another in the Government Museum, Hyderabad. (Reg. No. 1257). On the list of paintings of the Ibrahim II period made by Khandalavala (op. cit. p. 28) I would comment; (4) A Mughal painting. (9) 18th-century copy of early 17th-century miniature representing the same personage as the Bikaner portrait. (10) Poor 18th-century copy of portrait of Ibrahim II of about 1620. (13) Portraits effaced, but the book probably Bijapur of about 1605.

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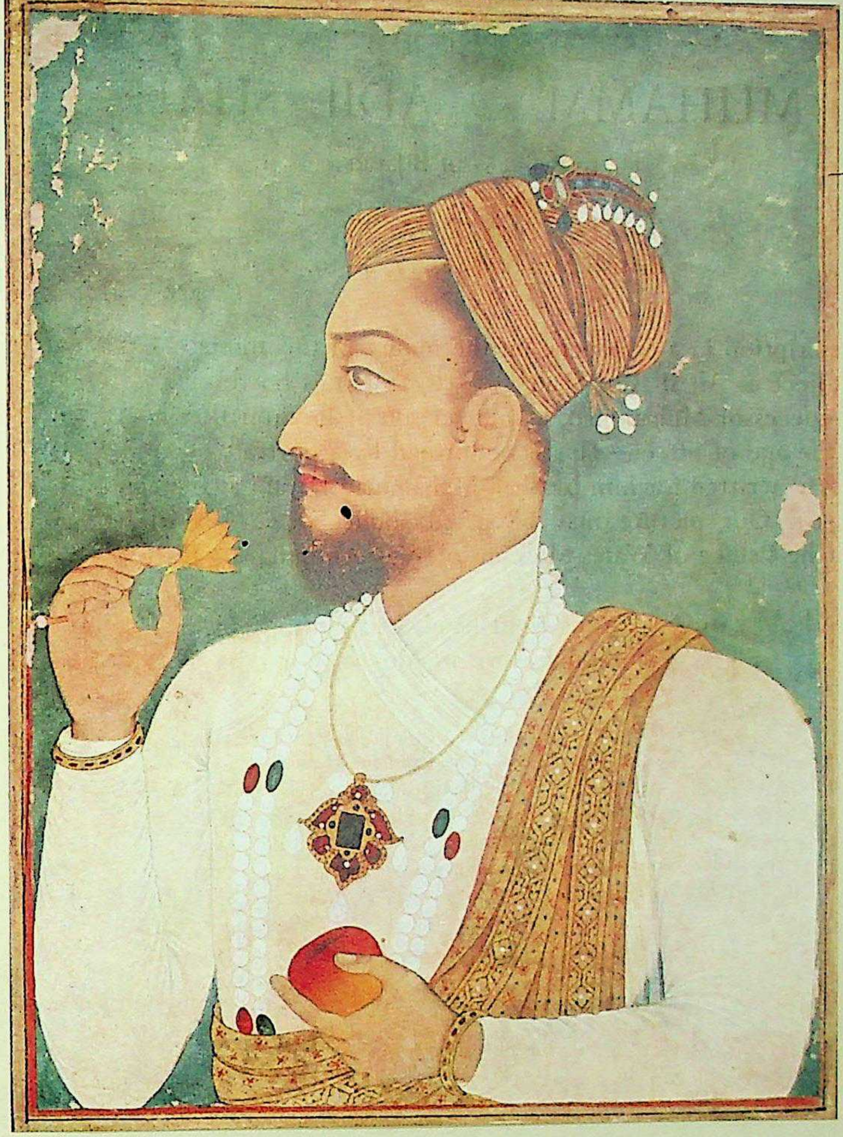
[1] In an American private collection.



Continued from page 5]

Bijapur by the Portuguese in 1510, "had good store of work". Indeed, whatever there was of European technique or vision which appealed to the Bijapur artist, may well have come direct from Goa rather than at second hand from Mughal painting.

Both Jahangir and Ibrahim II died in 1627. Under their successors, Shah Jahan and Muhammad Adil Shah, architecture and the decorative arts continued to develop. But the removal of the two great patrons heralded the decline of Islamic painting in India. Mughal painting, it is true, retained its cold and brilliant technique, though it had nothing new to say, until the early years of Shah Jahan's son and successor, Aurangzeb. In the Deccan, where style and technique went hand in hand, the decline was swift and absolute. It is difficult to account for this sudden loss of vision, for, once Ahmadnagar had been occupied, the two southern kingdoms were left undisturbed until the end of Shah Jahan's reign, and were never so settled and prosperous. It was Muhammad who raised as his own mausoleum the colossal dome of the Gol Gumbaz, which remains the most impressive monument to Islam in the Deccan. His portrait in the British Museum (Plate 9) adequately represents the standard of accomplishment of his painters. The great portrait style of Ibrahim's reign is already no more than a pleasant pattern of simple line and decorative colour. Nor had Golconda anything better to offer, if we may judge from a manuscript of the Khawar Namah painted in 1645 during the reign of Abdullah (1626–67). Indeed the cartoons of the Golconda *pintadoes* or painted hangings, so eagerly sought after in Europe during the 17th century, show more vivacity and sense of design than the surviving paintings.

In 1655–6 Aurangzeb, viceroy in the Deccan, whose rulers he regarded as mere fief-holders of the Empire, attacked Golconda, and in the following year Bijapur. Called off by Shah Jahan, he marched north and in 1658 deposed his father. The end of the Deccan kingdoms, though inevitable, was tediously prolonged, for Aurangzeb was for some time fully engaged in the north. The period of Aurangzeb's absence is of little artistic interest, and, historically, is occupied not by the activities of the two kingdoms but with the ever-increasing power of the Marathas under their great leader, Sivaji. We may however conclude with a picture, which painted perhaps for a Mughal governor, retains a certain wit and charm, a reminiscence of style which would disclose the Deccan hand even if the artist had not signed it (Plate 10). In 1681 Aurangzeb reappeared in the Deccan, where he was to remain until his death in 1707. In 1686 Sikandar, the last of the Adil Shahs, surrendered his capital. The following year Golconda was stormed, and Abul Hasan Qutb Shah, the 'King of Taste', was sent to end his days in the grim fortress of Daulatabad.

Note on Plate 10

A PRINCE IN A GARDEN

Deccan, about 1670–80

Size: 7⅜ × 12½ in.

The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

A prince, seated on a high chair in his garden, is entertained by three girls. One plays the vina, another offers pan, while a third, dressed as a page in European costume of about 1660, proffers a glass of wine. A fourth girl, who embraces a flowering tree, is teasing a fawn. Figures in European costume occur on wall-paintings in a water-pavilion at Kumatgi, a pleasure-resort ten miles east of Bijapur. The Indian courts of the 17th century were as diverted by this exotic finery, as their European contemporaries were with Chinese porcelain or Indian stuffs.

The style of the painting is strongly influenced by the Mughal school of Aurangzeb's reign. The occasional surprising note in the colour—the girl's pink breeches and the prince's olive-green trousers—give it a light and amusing prettiness, rare in northern painting.

The picture is signed Rahim Dakani ("of the Deccan"). A picture of a girl in the Victoria and Albert Museum (52OE–1888) is also attributed to this artist.

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with an introduction and notes by the author named

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MUGHAL PAINTING—J. V. S. WILKINSON

BYZANTINE PAINTING—GERVASE MATHEW

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